

IOWA'S EFFORTS TO REDUCE DISPARITY IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS
DIVISION OF CRIMINAL & JUVENILE
JUSTICE PLANNING

FEDERAL REQUIREMENT



The Federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP Act) as amended through P.L. 115-385, Section 223(a)(15) implement policy, practice, and system improvement strategies at the State, territorial, local, and tribal levels, as applicable, to identify and reduce racial and ethnic disparities among youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system, without establishing or requiring numerical standards or quotas by ---

- (A) Establishing or designating existing coordinating bodies
- (B) Identifying and analyzing data on race and ethnicity at the following OJJDP identified decision points (below) in Iowa's juvenile justice system:
 - 1. Arrest
 - 2. Diversion (filing of charges)
 - 3. Pre-trial detention (both secure and nonsecure)
 - 4. Disposition commitments (secure and nonsecure)
 - 5. Adult transfer
- (C) Developing and implementing a work plan

IOWA'S DMC FOCUS

DMC Subcommittee

Iowa has maintained a Disproportionate Minority Contact Subcommittee (DMC) for 20 years that meets quarterly. Staff support is provided by CJJP. The DMC Subcommittee serves as the planning body for Iowa's overall DMC efforts. Membership includes: leadership from communities of color, Juvenile Court Services (JCS), private youth serving agencies, state agency staff, etc.

ITFYW

The Iowa Task Force for Young Women (ITFYW) is a group dedicated to insuring Iowa's juvenile justice system conducts program planning, provides services, and implements efforts that include the unique issues and needs of girls in Iowa's juvenile justice system.

In recent years, these two groups (ITFYW and DMC) have partnered to promote their most important and common goals.

Generally speaking, girls have a lower level of risk and proceed into deep-end juvenile justice system processing at rates lower than boys. However, the levels of overrepresentation experienced by African-American girls is similar to that of African-American boys.

Iowa's Efforts to Reduce Disparity in the Juvenile Justice System

IOWA'S DMC EFFORTS

Iowa's Department of Human Rights, Division of Criminal & Juvenile Justice Planning provides technical assistance to address racial disparities in the juvenile justice system in 10 Iowa counties:

Black Hawk, Des Moines, Dubuque, Linn, Johnson, Polk, Pottawattamie, Scott, Webster, and Woodbury

This technical assistance to local sites includes: planning, data analysis, training, local event facilitation, collaboration with stakeholders, and more. All 10 sites have detailed plans regarding efforts to affect and reduce DMC.



DMC members are encouraged to become actively involved in the planning, review, and implementation of local DMC plans in their community.

DMC members insure that the views of all local interested parties and stakeholders are represented in their local meetings to collaboratively develop local plans.

For more information:

<https://humanrights.iowa.gov/cjjp/disproportionate-minority-contact>

IOWA DMC DATA

Pre-Charge Diversion (PCD)*

In Iowa, African-American youth have complaints to Juvenile Court Services (JCS) at a rate six times higher than White youth. Iowa's Pre-Charge Diversion (PCD) effort seeks to divert youth of color from arrest and referral to JCS. Youth referred to the diversion program instead of being engaged in Iowa's juvenile justice system. Initial data suggest that youth participating in PCD have lower recidivism rates than similar youth who are charged and referred to JCS.

Technical Violations (TV)*

Nearly 1/3 of Iowa youth placed in Iowa's juvenile detention facilities are held for technical violations—which is not a new delinquent act/crime, but instead is for a non-criminal violation of their probation. All of the federal research supports NOT placing technical violators in detention. The raw number of technical violators is higher for African-American youth than any other racial/ethnic group, including White youth.

*Source: Iowa Justice Data Warehouse (compiled July 2020)

CJJP has developed an application, Easy Access (EZA), which allows users to query select juvenile justice decision points (complaints, charges/allegations, informal adjustments, and petitions). You can find this tool at: <https://juvenilecourtstats.iowa.gov>

Adult Court (AC) Waiver*

African-American youth are overrepresented in adult court waiver. Most youth waived to adult court do not go to prison nor do they receive an intensive level of probation—thus, public safety is not increased. Public safety is one of the concerns driving AC waiver. An effort is needed to expand juvenile court jurisdiction for older juvenile justice system youth and reduce the use of AC waiver for youth that do not present a public safety risk or will not receive the level of supervision required.

Data

On a quarterly basis, data is shared with the 10 local DMC communities (noted above under federal requirement). These reports demonstrate the extent of overrepresentation of youth in their communities and allow community stakeholders to track the extent to which established goals are being met in their own communities.



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